



## ALPINE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Lilly Taylor • President  
Michael Gowans • Vice President

June 3, 2004

Otis Willoughby  
Alpine City Council  
602 E 300 N  
Alpine, UT 84004

Dear Mr. Willoughby:

The Alpine Education Association appreciates and understands the many hours of service the Alpine School District AD Hoc Committee has put into discussions and input on the issue of splitting the school district. The efforts have not gone unnoticed.

As representatives of the approximately 2,500 teachers in Alpine School District, we wish to express the teachers' great opposition to the proposed split of Alpine School District. We do not believe that a split would be in the best interest of children, patrons, taxpayers or employees. The following are a few of our concerns:

1. No one seems to be able to say exactly what will happen to the employees. Our legal council assures us that our reduction in force policy will cover the reductions necessary for the new Alpine School District. The fate of those left to man the Pioneer School District is unclear. Thoughts go from no guarantee of a position to maybe a position if they apply and are accepted. No teachers would vote to cut these teachers out of a job. None of their relatives or friends would vote for this either.
2. The guarantee of benefit transfer and salary appears to be for only one year. Teachers do not want to lose hard earned benefits. The new District is almost sure to want to cut these and reduce salary.



3. Many teachers, not just from Alpine School District, live in the affected area. They are not interested in paying increased taxes. Especially since the actual increase is not known. The calculations do not include a new district office, busses, bus garages, or maintenance facilities. The possibility of increased taxes will have a severe negative impact on the value of property, thus reducing income to the district.
4. The new Alpine School District also faces tax problems. The estimates do not take into account the reduction in force costs. Nor do they recognize that there will need to be a consolidation of schools as the student population shrinks. This will force the closing of neighborhood schools and increase busing costs. At the very least it will cause confusion, frustration, and significantly impact students and patrons.
5. The study committee has a legal opinion from the county attorney which they have refused to make public. The only reason for keeping this document secret is that it will greatly impact the voting. This is supposed to be an open process with full disclosure. Refusing to release this document severely calls into question the ethics of the committee and the entire process.
6. We believe that the study only shows what might happen or be needed. It does not measure the willingness of the taxpayers in the new district to pass school bonds. The foreclosure rate and the reduced and free lunch numbers in the new district should indicate that there may be no chance for a bond to pass.
7. We believe that those who have wanted this split are in the minority and it is not right for a minority to force their wishes upon the rest of us.
8. Very little has been said about what it would be like to have a school board where each member has his/her own agenda. We can give you many instances of what happens in these situations. The very changes that the petitioners want may never happen because of the dynamics of a school board in a small school district.
9. The reduced class size and smaller schools that were promised by those who circulated the petition will not happen. The new district will never have sufficient money to carry out this promise. Lehi is not Park City.



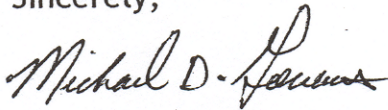
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In summary, we urge you not to recommend that this be placed on the ballot. Instead, it should be sent back to the legislature. We have a right to know what we are voting for and not just someone's opinion. We remind you that there has been no estimate of the litigation costs should this pass. This will be a significant burden to the taxpayers.

It should be obvious, from the great amount of opposition, that it is a small group who are driving the issue."

Again, thank you for the time in reviewing our concerns. These concerns are valid. We appreciate your immediate attention to them and wish for them to be addressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Gowans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "G".

Michael D. Gowans  
Alpine Education Association President



July 9, 2003

## Splitting Alpine District-Bad Idea!!

Representative Dave Cox purports that splitting the district will aid students. This a bad idea that would have devastating effects on educational opportunities for Alpine School District (ASD) students.

The research Representative Cox refers to for justifying splitting the district is based on a piece of research done in a state that is not remotely comparable to Utah. Rep. Cox and his supporters believe that smaller districts equate to higher test scores, less bureaucracy, and more public input. What is known to improve test scores is smaller schools, smaller class sizes, and effective instructional practices. Smaller districts do not mean smaller schools. More tax dollars equate to smaller schools, smaller class sizes, and teacher training. Smaller districts increase demands on limited public tax dollars. If Alpine School District were split into three districts there would be a tremendous duplication of services including transportation, maintenance, administration, support services, etc.

An even greater economic disaster would be in the generation and disbursement of bond and leeway dollars. Besides dividing the district geographically, it would divide the district into the haves and have nots. The haves would be the Orem area which generates 37% of the tax base. The "have nots" would be in Lehi and the surrounding communities with 17% of the tax base. Because of the rapid growth in North Utah County, these residents would face a tremendous tax burden to maintain current levels of education. Although the Orem area would benefit in the short term, their tax base is steadily declining and is now 37% as opposed to being above 50% just a few years ago. Orem City Councilman Dean Dickerson complains that it is unfair Orem residents have to pay for the schools in the north end of the county. What Councilman Dickerson fails to recognize is the contribution tax payers from the north end of the county made to the Orem schools when they were experiencing their growth.

Mr. Cox further argues there is little accountability with Alpine School District. The fact is there is more accountability now than ever before. Every high school is represented by an elected board member from their attendance area. Every school has its own community council mandated by the legislature. Community councils have been empowered to make critical educational decisions in behalf of the children in their attendance area.

Finally, Mr. Cox states that opportunities in local schools are only for the elite. I challenge Mr. Cox to validate his comment. There are numerous opportunities for students to be meaningfully involved at every high school, from athletics to performing arts, to clubs, to academic opportunities. Splitting ASD would diminish educational opportunities due to the lack of funding.

The July 1<sup>st</sup> article concludes with equating the Columbine incident to the size of the district. This statement is sensationalism. According to National Association of Secondary School Principals, school violence is as likely to occur in a small school as well as a large school.

The answer does not lie in smaller districts but in increased parental involvement and continued school improvement by dedicated teachers, administrators, and parents. Collectively we are stronger as one district as opposed to three smaller districts, now and in the future.

Splitting ASD is a bad idea.

Sheldon Worthington, Principal Lehi High School